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The Emulation of Heroes

By MARY SHERIDAN

The great Mao Tse-tung era we are in is also the era of the coming of heroes. A succession of outstanding men rise up from the masses and a profusion of good men and good deeds mark the era. A Lei Feng was born, and close on his heels came countless other Lei Fengs. Now a Wang Chieh has appeared and there will certainly be thousands of other Lei Feng and Wang Chieh types of communist fighters manifesting themselves in our battle ranks. To model oneself after heroes and learn from great people has always been the mainstay of the Party and Chairman Mao's teachings.¹

MAO'S cultural revolution is perhaps the most extensive effort in history to transform a nation by changing the character of its people. It is a moralistic and inner- as well as outer-directed revolution. In the simplest ideological terms, "good men and good deeds" is a central theme, and "selfishness" is the principal enemy. To personify these ideals and to illustrate the method of attaining them, a succession of heroes have been put forward for nation-wide emulation.

The emulation of heroes in China is not a communist invention. It was a mainstay of Confucian education in the form of stories about great emperors, generals, poets, magistrates and filial children. This technique of emulation was never abandoned even when China entered more modern times; it continued right through the Republican period. Mao himself came under such influences. One has only to read through the standard series of school textbooks published in Taiwan to see the same kind of stories that influenced Mao. What is different under the Communist system is, (1) the careful ideological control of the hero characterisations, action and language by which the ideological "message" is conveyed; (2) the use of nation-wide campaigns so that *all* children (and adults) are emulating the *same* hero at the same time; (3) the degree of intensity and active participation encouraged.²

¹ *Liberation Army Daily* editorial of November 23, entitled "Be good and do good by learning from good people and good deeds" and subtitled "Look to Wang Chieh for inspiration." BBC, Summary of World Broadcasts (hereafter SWB), FE/2022.

² Heroes in modern Chinese communist textbooks are of course very carefully selected. Most have been drawn from the modern revolutionary period and fall into two types: the great statesmen and founding figures of the CCP, and the heroes and martyrs from the *lowest* ranks—Tung Ts'un-jui, Liu Hu-lan, etc. Few traditional

In 1940, Mao said that "any given culture (as an ideological form) is the reflection of the politics and economics of a given society."³ In order to change the culture, it was necessary to reorganise productive relations, and then the society would be transformed. After 1949, this standard Marxist premise remained the principle behind China's First Five-Year Plan, just as it was for the Russian plans—industrialisation would lead to proletarianisation. But when Mao interrupted this slow and orthodox Marxist progression by pushing through his Great Leap Forward policy in 1958, he reversed the basic premise. Now proletarianisation, meaning a change in people's outlook, would lead to industrialisation.

After the failure of the Great Leap Forward, Chinese society returned to a policy of "economism"⁴ under the leadership of the Party. But the army, under Lin Piao's direction, began to practise and develop Mao's voluntaristic approach to proletarianisation. Lin Piao's "four firsts" directive of October 1960 clearly set out the Maoist priorities of non-material incentives. The process of morale-building was also a process of improving techniques for socialist education. In March 1963, the PLA produced its first hero of the new type, Lei Feng. He was exhibited both as concrete proof that the Mao-Lin method worked, and as a model for its further propagation. The extensive emulation campaign was aimed not only at the army, but at society in general and youth in particular.⁵

The Lei Feng campaign was followed by a two-year lull in "biographical" hero promotions at the national level. During the interim, however, there was a steady development of hero types in literature, especially by PLA writers. In the spring of 1965, the tremendously popular novel, *The Song of Ouyang Hai* by Chin Ching-mai, appeared

ones such as emperors, scholars or statesmen appear. They have been eliminated as elements of "feudal" and "bourgeois" culture. A few exceptions have been made for historical figures such as leaders of traditional peasant revolts, great inventors (as Ts'ai Lun—inventor of paper), and a few patriotic martial leaders (carefully redrawn to conform to Communist "class" requirements). Now with the 1967 revision of school syllabi, even these may be eliminated. The new Wang Chieh type heroes are so carefully drawn to reflect subtle ideological fluctuations that even they are subject to retouching. For example, *The Song of Ouyang Hai* was revised once in 1965, and is reported to be undergoing a second revision.

³ Mao Tse-tung, "On New Democracy," *Selected Works* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), Vol. II, p. 340.

⁴ "Economism," as the Chinese use the term, means the separation of economics from politics and the primacy of economic solutions, specifically (1) the free working of price mechanisms and (2) material incentives.

⁵ For example, the Youth League organ *Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien* (*China Youth*) devoted its entire March 2 issue to Lei Feng at the start of that campaign, and from then on the subject of heroism was often treated in feature articles. This continued through 1964, when the "Emulate the Army" campaign gave new impetus to the subject of heroism; in 1965, issues numbers 22, 23 and 24 gave full space to Wang Chieh. Subsequently, Wang Chieh and Lei Feng remained common by-words for the new ideals of Mao's "heroic society."

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and registered another credit for the army.⁶ By the time the PLA sprang Wang Chieh on the public in November 1965, its technique was polished. This major campaign was soon followed by a spate of others running from February through July 1966. Then, after the emergence of the Red Guards in August–September, there was another transformation in the characterisation of heroes.

The heroes of 1963–67, although decidedly new types, are part of a revolutionary hero tradition which can be traced back to two sources: (1) the fighter heroes and cadre martyrs of the anti-Japanese and civil war period, and (2) the production heroes of the Yen-an days. The fighter heroes and cadre martyrs are fairly simple characterisations. Older men such as Wang Jo-fei still form part of the modern PLA stock of heroes to be emulated, but more attention has been paid in recent years to such youthful heroes as Tung Ts'un-jui, Huang Chi-kuang and Liu Hu-lan.⁷ In their diaries, Lei Feng and Wang Chieh refer to themselves as heirs to the Tung Ts'un-jui tradition. Indeed, they have much in common. Like Tung, they are propagandists as well as soldiers, protectors of the people (assisting them directly through good deeds and small kindnesses) as well as selfless fighters. However Tung has none of the ideological sophistication of Lei Feng and Wang Chieh; he is simply a "good person" with his heart in the right revolutionary place. Wang Chieh is a new type of hero who only resembles Tung Ts'un-jui in the outward form of his revolutionary optimism, his service to the people and his bravery. But his motivations are different. The propagandists have attempted to project some of Wang Chieh's ideological consciousness back to Tung Ts'un-jui; if they did not they would open themselves to the accusation that heroes like Tung were simply good men in a humanistic rather than a communistic sense.

In contrast to these youthful "warrior" heroes, the Yen-an production heroes were older people. The Yen-an production hero campaigns of 1943–44 coincided with the rectification campaign of 1942–44. They occurred at a time when the KMT blockade around

⁶ The author, a PLA writer, says that he was assigned to Ouyang Hai's former company shortly after the hero's death by order of the army commanders in Canton; their specific purpose was for him to write a novel about the hero "which would describe the changes during those years in the army." *Chinese Literature*, November 1966, pp. 108–109.

⁷ See *Ch'ing-nien ying-hsiung ti ku-shih (Stories of Young Heroes)* (Peking: China Youth Publishing House, 1954). This includes the lives of Tung Ts'un-jui—liberation war; Huang Chi-kuang—Korean war; Lo Sheng-chiao—Korean war; Wang Hsiao-ho—civil war martyr; Liu Hu-lan—15-year-old girl cadre and civil war martyr; Ting Yu-chun—girl cadre and civil war martyr.

Yenan made self-sufficiency in food a critical issue.⁸ The promotion of Stakhanov-type model workers was used to spur on the production drive.⁹ These models were presented as simple proof of the Marxist dictum that the working people's wisdom, experience and skill would make great leaps in production inevitable once they had become masters of their own means of production.¹⁰

In the literature of the 1950s, stories concerned with the contemporary scene featured Stakhanov-type heroes, while fighters and martyrs were the heroes in fiction portraying the glorious revolutionary past. In the 1960s, Party writers continued to use the Stakhanov model for portraying older men and women. Their heroism is shown as they conquer a particular problem in their occupation, or in the "conquest of nature." Young people are also praised for their "working style," but their thoughts and feelings are more openly exposed to the reader, and they are usually portrayed as more progressive. In these years, the PLA propaganda department began to expand its literary output and to develop a different style of hero similar to the Tung Ts'un-jui type. Eventually all the Maoist heroes, like Wang Chieh and both the youthful and adult heroes of the Red Guard period, adhered to this pattern.

PLA HEROES AND DIARIES—MARCH 1963—JULY 1966

From the Lei Feng campaign onwards, the release of hero material has been carefully controlled and the nature of its presentation highly developed. Diaries, stories, songs and films about a single hero were

⁸ According to Stuart Schram, the first flowering of the Mao cult occurred in association with the 1942-44 Yen-an rectification campaign, and was also related to the labour hero campaigns. He says that "manifestations of the cult are to be found in the messages from labour heroes which began to arrive in Yen-an toward the end of 1943, saluting Mao as 'the star of salvation [*chiu-hsing*] of the Chinese people' and such." Schram, *Mao Tse-tung* (London: Allen Lane, 1967), pp. 215-216.

⁹ In December 1943, at the height of the production drive, the *Chieh-fang Jih-pao* (*Liberation Daily*) carried an almost daily feature on production heroes (a third to a half a page of space, sometimes more), whose presentation followed a fairly simple formula. A small sketched portrait of the model worker (male or female) headed the column, which began with a brief account of his life, namely, his class background. Next, details of his production record and his production methods were given. The tone of the articles was very businesslike; the hero's personality and private life were not described, and there was no ideological dressing to the facts and figures. Aside from the public acclaim they received, the labour heroes were also given small material rewards. For example, on December 19, 1943, a mass meeting of production heroes took place at which rewards and honours were distributed. Some heroic collectives were given prizes of an ox or money. Individual heroes were given money prizes, or items like towels, handkerchiefs, socks, soap, matches and seeds. Non-utility awards—small banners with the writing of the leaders, like Mao and Chu Teh—were also given out.

¹⁰ Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme" (1875), in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1962), II, pp. 21-24.

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issued simultaneously. The heroes promoted during the period March 1963–July 1966 fall into two categories: (1) the young PLA heroes, and (2) the two older men, Wang Chin-hsi and Chiao Yü-lu. The principal heroes of this period were:

Lei Feng: PLA—sub-lieutenant/member of People's Congress of Fushun; age 22; died August 15, 1962; campaign March 1963; CCP member; diary. Cause of death—accident.

Ouyang Hai: PLA—squad leader; age 23; died November 18, 1963; publicised in novel *The Song of Ouyang Hai* (first edition, spring 1965; second edition and campaign, April–May 1966); CCP member. Cause of death—pushed horse loaded with ammunition out of path of train, saved train and comrades.

Wang Chieh: PLA—squad leader; age 23; died July 14, 1965; campaign November, 1965; CYCL member/posthumous membership in CCP; diary. Cause of death—threw own body over defective mine to save lives of commune militia he was teaching.

Mai Hsien-teh: PLA—sailor, no rank; age 21; critically wounded August 6, 1965, but survives; admitted to CCP on August 30, 1965; campaign February 1966; notes published but no diary. During sea-battle remained at post for three hours despite brain injury.

Wang Chin-hsi: Worker—pioneer worker of Tach'ing oilfield 1960–65; age 43; CCP member; nicknamed "Man of Iron," he was formerly a drill team captain but was promoted to vice-director of the oilfield in 1966; publicised January–February 1966 on radio and television.

Chiao Yü-lu: Cadre—Party Secretary of Lank'ao County; age 42; died May 14, 1964; campaign February 1966. Led Lank'ao County to agricultural victory in spite of severe personal illness.

Liu Ying-chün: PLA—no rank; age 21; died March 15, 1966; campaign July 1966; posthumously made "model member" of CYCL—posthumous membership in CCP; diary. Cause of death—saved children from runaway horses and wagon.¹¹

The most important innovation in the presentation of the new PLA

¹¹ Lei Feng diary in *Lao-tung jen-min ti hao erh-tzu Lei Feng* (Good son of the working people) (Peking: China Youth Publishing House, April 1963). Ouyang Hai: *Ouyang Hai chih ko* (Song of Ouyang Hai) (Peking: PLA Literature and Arts Society, April 1966). Wang Chieh diary in *Wang Chieh jih-chi* (The diary of Wang Chieh) (Peking: People's Publishing House, November 1965). Mai Hsien-teh notes and editorials in *Ke-ming ying ku-t'ou Mai Hsien-teh* (Hard bone of the revolution, Mai Hsien-teh) (Peking: China Youth Publishing House, January 1966). English story and pictures in *China Reconstructs*, December 1966. Wang Chin-hsi: NCNA, January 12, 1966, SWB,FE/W352. English story and pictures in *China Reconstructs*, May 1966 (includes stories on Chiao Yü-lu and Wang Chieh). Chiao Yü-lu: NCNA February 7, 1966, SWB,FE/2084. Liu Ying-chün diary in *Jen-min ti hao erh-tzu Liu Ying-chün* (Good son of the people, Liu Ying-chün) (Peking: People's Publishing House, September 1966). English story and pictures in *China Reconstructs*, November 1966.

heroes, is the use of diaries. Diaries can be more didactic and more "soul-searching" than the third person style. They introduce the first person to give a convincing and personal perspective, although the second person was also employed, in the form of eye-witness testimonies from comrades and acquaintances. The three diaries of Lei Feng, Wang Chieh, and Liu Ying-chün,¹² reveal not only the evolution of the PLA hero-type, but also something about PLA education. The Wang Chieh and Liu Ying-chün diaries (but not Lei Feng's) have been edited so that their entries are placed under section headings such as: "Whatever Chairman Mao says, I will do," "One must never forget the class struggle," "A revolutionary fighter loves the people," "Revolutionary heroes as examples." Only within these subdivisions, do the entries follow chronologically. This is no doubt to facilitate study, and may be combined with Mao-study on the same topics. The range of topics chosen from Mao seems limited to extremely simple ones, showing the level of the soldier's comprehension. The content and style of the writing reflects the trend toward negation of "self" and increasing substitution of Mao's thought for self-expression.

Lei Feng's diary has a fairly loose style, and is romantic in an adolescent vein. There are 61 entries, of which 24 mention the Party frequently. In only eight entries does Mao's name appear unaccompanied by reference to the Party. Mao is not quoted, but vague reference is made to his "works" or "instructions." The ideological level is primitive in that entries about the Party or Mao mainly relate the hero's own feelings of love and devotion for them, rather than making an ideological analysis according to their teachings.

July 1, 1961.

I felt particularly happy this morning when I got up, because last night I had dreamt of our great leader Chairman Mao. And it so happens that today is the Party's 40th Anniversary. Today I have so much to tell the Party, so much gratitude to the Party, so much determination to fight for the Party. . . . I am like a toddler and the Party is like my mother who helps me, leads me, and teaches me to walk. . . . my beloved Party, my loving mother, I am always your loyal son. . .

Many of Lei Feng's entries are accounts of his own good deeds—how he donated his holiday time to sweeping out the train station or washing for his comrades, how he repaired his truck in freezing weather even though his fingers cracked and bled, and so on. Such entries rarely mention Mao or Party, and are mainly concerned with the hero's own view of himself. Thus a synthesis of action and ideological self analysis is not yet achieved in this diary.

¹² Dates of diaries: Lei Feng—October 1959 to August 1962; Wang Chieh—February 1963 to June 1965; Liu Ying-chün—June 1962 to December 1965.

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October 15, 1961.

Sunday today. I didn't go out; instead, I washed 5 mattresses for the comrades in my squad, repaired Kao K'uei-yun's bedcover, assisted the cooks to wash more than 600 cabbages, swept inside and outside the room, and other things. . . . In all, I've done what I should have done. I'm tired but happy. . . . It's glorious to be a nameless hero.

Wang Chieh's diary is a more sophisticated effort than Lei Feng's. It has 116 entries: 59 refer to Mao, and of these, 25 contain direct quotes. The Party is mentioned frequently. When Wang Chieh quotes Mao, he adds didactic lessons for his own benefit. He paraphrases Mao's instructions in simplified language, and notes down how he himself intends to act on them. (Sometimes he even writes his resolutions in rhymes and jingles.)

March 5, 1964.

Chairman Mao says: "All cadres and all the people must always bear in mind that our country is a great socialist country, but also an economically backward, poor country. This is a great contradiction. To make our country wealthy and strong we need decades of hard struggle, including strict economizing; be absolutely against wastefulness—that is our policy of building up the country by industry and frugality."

Having studied Chairman Mao's works, I realised the importance of economising. A drop of petrol, a screw, a fuse, or an ounce of dynamite is the property of the nation and the people. Our country is a great socialist country, but also an economically backward poor country. Thus the need for industriousness and economising. These, however, will have to be done regularly like washing one's face. This year we shall have a long period of engineering work, during which I will do my best to save drops of oil, inches of fuse, and ounces of dynamite. However little I can save, I will do my best to save for my country.

Like Lei Feng, Wang Chieh recounts some of his own deeds, but he is far more analytical, constantly trying to "correct" himself.

April 5, 1963.

Something happened to me on the 1st of February. According to reliable [secret] information, early the next morning we were to have a surprise drill for emergency muster. In order to act quickly and be ready first, I prepared my rifle and ammunition before going to sleep that night. In the morning I got up half an hour earlier [than the others], quietly packed my rucksack, and waited for the assembly. Just as soon as the assembly whistle blew, I rushed out. In this way I was first. On the way back I received the deputy CO's public praise.

To play deceptive tricks, to fool the leadership and in this way receive praise is inglorious. Our training is for war, for toughening ourselves. If in peacetime we neglect our training, in wartime we won't pull through and we won't be able to defeat the enemy.

After this I shall certainly deal correctly with the question of honor, and be a nameless hero.

In this way, Wang Chieh's diary is really a textbook on the Mao-Lin methods of thought reform, and a guidebook for becoming a Maoist hero. (Wang Chieh himself seems quite conscious that he is trying to become a hero.) In effect, Wang Chieh has only two teachers: Mao and other heroes.

March 13, 1963.

Study such heroes as Tung Ts'un-jui, Huang Chi-kuang, Ch'iu Shao-yün, An Yeh-min, Lei Feng, etc. Make their exemplary deeds into a mirror and never cease comparing one-self through self-examination.

Significantly, none of Liu Ying-chün's good deeds are entered in his diary. They are known only from the editorials and testimonials of others. In this sense the hero appears "selfless," at least insofar as he disregards his own meritorious actions and the reactions of others. The diary is a short selection of 27 entries: 22 entries are devoted to Mao's thought, and of these, half contain direct quotes. The Party is seldom mentioned. In fact, this diary is entirely concerned with *thought* processes, and illustrates only the correct Maoist forms of soul-searching and cultivation of revolutionary spirit.

September 2, 1964.

I have read more than once, the essay "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains." After each time I felt new inspiration, and new progress on my part. The fact that the foolish old man could move away two mountains explains his resolution. But when I am faced with a small difficulty, I stop my progress and succumb to it. Thinking of the foolish old man, I feel that my confidence and determination increase a hundred-fold. I must apply the foolish old man's spirit to overcome all the obstacles to my progress and be a man who dares to struggle and win.

In sum, the diaries reflect the growing emphasis on "thought," as the determining factor behind action. This is a long way towards idealism, and far from Mao's materialist definition of culture in "On New Democracy" as "the reflection of the politics and economics of a society." The heroes are a reflection of the politics of the present "Maoist era," but they are also intended to be the vanguard in changing productive relations. The heroes illustrate the idea that "Mao Tse-tung's thought is transformed into an enormous material power."¹³ They also illustrate why youth has been chosen for a special role, because of all China's "poor and blank" people, the minds of youth are purest—they are the cleanest white sheet of paper on which Mao's words can be written.¹⁴

¹³ *People's Daily*, June 27, 1966, p. 6.

¹⁴ "China's 600 million people have two remarkable peculiarities; they are, first of all, poor, and secondly, blank. That may seem like a bad thing, but it is really a good thing. Poor people want change, want to do things, want revolution.

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HEROISM: THE WANG CHIEH TYPE

The characteristics of the Wang Chieh type heroes are briefly: all are under 24; all are PLA soldiers (or sailors) of lowest rank: all practise thought reform and perform exemplary deeds for socialist reconstruction; all become heroes by virtue of their daily application of Mao's thought. In patterning their behaviour after other heroes, they are consciously striving to be heroes themselves, although their code of honour (as in Wang Chieh's diary) dictates that they remain modestly anonymous. But to be an anonymous hero is a difficult task, for a hero by definition must be something of an individualist, at least in his wish to outshine other men.¹⁵ Yet such individualism is inadmissible in Maoism. Thus anyone who makes an effort to turn small deeds into great ones is in danger of becoming a very "pushy" character. Wang Chieh seems to have been one. Although the Maoists would call him an activist, we might be tempted to call him a busy-body.

When the company decided to set up a hair-cutting team, he repeatedly asked to join it. The others said that he knew nothing about cutting hair, but he was not convinced. As soon as the team began work, he took his face towel and soap there to shampoo the comrades. When he saw the awkwardness of shampooing by squatting on the ground, he gathered some useless pieces of wood to make a few basin stands. In this way, he "pushed" his way into the team to become indispensable.¹⁶

Ouyang Hai presented the same kind of problem. The author of *The Song of Ouyang Hai*, Chin Ching-mai, describes his own difficulty in handling this "self-assertive principle" in presenting the growth of his hero:

Not having the right sense of proportion to start with, I over-emphasised his keenness to outshine others, giving him more personal ambition than was consistent with his class nature. My desire to make a strong contrast between his early and later periods led me to depart from the truth here. I corrected this after it was pointed out by the leadership.¹⁷

A clean sheet of paper has no blotches, and so the newest and most beautiful words can be written on it . . ." Mao article [from *Hung Ch'i*, June 1, 1958] no title given, in Stuart Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (New York: Praeger, 1964), p. 253.

¹⁵ For a comparison with the classical definition of the hero, Sir Maurice Bowra's analysis of heroics is very useful: "In their attempts to classify mankind in different types the early Greek philosophers gave a special place to those men who live for action and for the honour which comes from it. Such, they believed, are moved by an important element in the human soul, the self-assertive principle, which is to be distinguished equally from the appetites and from the reason and realizes itself in brave doings. They held that the life of action is superior to the pursuit of profit or the gratification of the senses, that the man who seeks honour is himself an honourable figure . . . for 'they choose one thing above all others, immortal glory among mortals.'" C. M. Bowra, *Heroic Poetry* (London: Mac-Millan, 1964), p. 1. ¹⁶ *Chung-kuo Ch'ing-nien* (China Youth), No. 22, 1965, p. 21.

¹⁷ Chinese Literature, November 1966, pp. 114-115.

Thus in theory, a proletarian hero has an "innate" modesty which protects him from expressing individualism in his acts of heroism. In practice, however, the contradiction is not so easy to solve, and it continues to pose a problem of presentation and character definition in the propagandists.¹⁸

The classical heroes were admired by their contemporaries for their real superiority in natural endowments. Achilles was such a hero "by nature." He was born a hero, he did not have to become one—and he remained a hero even when he behaved disgracefully: raging, sulking and finally slaughtering the better man. Classical heroes were not necessarily likeable people, although they were supposed to be admirable. The essential common element was that they constantly put themselves to the test, and pursued honour through risk. Wang Chieh makes an interesting contrast. He is anything but well endowed. He has the sympathetic characteristic of being perhaps slightly below average in intelligence and physique. At least it appears so, since the soldiers he taught to read were soon promoted over him and he was refused the assignments of a strong man.

One winter night, the unit was sent out to build a bridge. There was a thin layer of ice on the river and chilling wind and rain struck down harder and harder. The company needed six strong men to work in the river. Wang Chieh wanted to, but the squad leader thought he was not strong enough, and therefore refused him. He begged: "Squad leader, if you really want to make a good fighter of me, you must give me every opportunity to steel myself." Saying this, he took off his quilt tunic and jumped in the water before anyone else.¹⁹

What is so amazing about this episode, aside from illustrating that Wang Chieh was not well built, is that it could be held up as praiseworthy at all. Here the hero is risking disorder in the squad for the sake of steeling *himself*. He never takes "no" for an answer.

One might say that none of the new Chinese heroes have superior natural endowments. They are in every respect ordinary. Their only asset is their youth (although in this they are "superior"), their only

¹⁸ There must be *some* reward for heroism, symbolic or spiritual. And for would-be heroes, the temptation for public acclaim must be great. Judging from recent reports like the following from Harbin, a regular system of merit awards now seems to be coming into use: "On behalf of the Provincial Military District, Comrade (Hsieh Shang-hua) presented a first class collective merit certificate and a flag of 'paragon in supporting the Left and model in cherishing the people' to the honoured Mao Tse-tung's thought propaganda team and first class merit certificates to the two martyrs. He also presented red-covered books of Chairman Mao's quotations and gleaming Chairman Mao's badges to the members of the propaganda team." The two martyrs had "first braved heavy smoke and raging fire to save Chairman Mao's portrait and quotation-poster." After the portrait was rescued, grain and lives were also saved. SWB, FE/2648.

¹⁹ *China Youth*, No. 22, 1965, p. 21.

weapon is Mao's thought. But this is considered more than sufficient to handle any situation. They are "awakened" average men, self-creating heroes. If Wang Chieh has any distinctive feature, it is his *will* to become a hero.²⁰ Of course since he is pictured as a bit slower and weaker than his comrades, there is more room for improvement, and the victory of mind over matter seems more dramatic. Wang Chieh's will to be a Maoist here set him somewhat apart from his comrades. In his ardour to serve he does things *for* others, not so much *with* others.²¹ This would appear to contradict the ideals of group cohesion and military obedience. But the idea seems to be that zealots (who act more as *I* than *we*) must be excused on the grounds that they are acting for the greater good of the people. Heroes move other men by reflecting what men *ought to be*. They are designed to produce discontent in others and specifically to stir them to emulation.

The Wang Chieh type heroes must not only be devoted to Mao's thought, they must apply it in the act of overcoming, one by one, the "ordeals" of daily tasks. The diaries illustrate this day to day progress of applying Mao's thought, showing how small situations can have great meaning. After a hero's death, his attitude towards life is examined, and in it is found the motivation for his sacrifice. This point is so important to the Maoists that they take every care in the diaries to avoid the accusation that a hero's death might be the result of "a momentary righteous impulse."²² It is the exemplary life and specifically the Maoist education, which alone makes possible the noble death.

The essential corollary of heroic action is the presence of danger. The element of risk is most commonly introduced into the daily lives of the heroes in the form of their risking their health. Ordinary events are turned into ordeals by making them tests of endurance or physical

²⁰ Origins for this emphasis on *will*, and on toughening the body together with the mind, may of course be traced to such sources as Mao's school essay "A Study of Physical Culture," written in 1917. (His theme was not particularly original; it had been popular with revolutionaries since 1900): "Such objects of military heroism as courage, dauntlessness, audacity, and perseverance are all matters of will. Let me explain this with an example. To wash our feet in ice water makes us acquire courage and dauntlessness, as well as audacity . . . *the will is the antecedent of a man's career*. Those whose bodies are small and frail are flippant in their behaviour. Those whose skin is flabby are soft and dull in will. Thus does the body influence the mind." Schram, *Political Thought*, p. 99.

²¹ The episodes of his plunging into the icy river, and of the haircutting team, are only two of many such incidents. He had a habit of getting up at 4 a.m. to fill the wash basins of his comrades, or of sitting up through the night to dry their rain-soaked coats before the fire. Yet he never relates an episode in which he was the inconspicuous participant in a group activity.

²² See Liu Ying-chün's refutation of Feng Ting on the issue of whether Tung Ts'un-juí's heroism was due to a "righteous impulse." In *Liu Ying-chün*, pp. 55-56.

strain; the heroes lift heavier loads than others, run faster, work longer, sleep less. They cultivate a disregard for discomfort and pain.

Wang Chieh: On April 15, 1964, his right hand was burnt by a piece of tar which caught fire. Defying the company CO's and other comrades' advice to take a rest, he did not let up his study of Chairman Mao's works. He studied while his right arm was in a sling. He practised writing with his left hand, so as to persist with his study. He told others: "A man can take a rest, but not his brain."²³

Ouyang Hai: [Ouyang had burned his hands severely in a fire, but continued to work by wearing gloves and treating his burns himself with a bottle of All Purpose Oil—thus he kept his injuries a secret. When his friends find out, Hai makes them promise not to report him]: "One of the 'Five Goods' is good health. If you report that I've had this accident I won't be rated a 'Five Good' soldier at the end of the year. You'll have to be responsible. It's a very serious thing." He could control himself no longer, and burst out laughing.²⁴

The hero breaks the rules and laughs! This seems like a dangerous doctrine to place before young people, but it features repeatedly in all the hero stories. This incident also illustrates the way in which risk is introduced into ordinary tasks to glamorise them. The author of *Song of Ouyang Hai* once saw a small culvert which Ouyang Hai had built during road construction. From this the author constructed the following scene:

Then his friends heard a sound under the ground and Hai crawled out from the culvert. They burst into laughter at the sight he presented. They laughed till their teeth ached.

Hai was stripped to the waist. Except for his eyes, he was covered with mud from head to toe, and his hair stood upright like a brush. He looked at the men in bewilderment, while spitting mud.

"What's so funny? Tell me."

This made them laugh all the harder. Yen-sheng flung half a bucket of water over his head.

"This'll clean you off."

"I'll bash you for that, Yen-sheng," yelled Hai, trying to dodge. The icy water, running down his body, turned the mud into mire. "This brown sugar isn't bad," he jested. "But it's a little hard on the teeth. What are you fellows laughing at?"

"At you, squad leader," said Yen-sheng teasingly. "I've heard of muddy monkeys before, but today is the first time I've seen one."

"Seriously now. . . ." Hai rinsed his mouth. ". . . I've checked the culvert. All the sections are neatly in place and the right angle. Thousands of tons of machinery can roll over them and they won't collapse. Tomorrow we'll bolster them with a bit of cement and we'll be finished."²⁵

²³ *China Youth*, No. 22, 1965, p. 17.

²⁴ *Chinese Literature*, November 1966, p. 80.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

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Ouyang's friends then insist that he remove his gloves to shake hands on their joint achievement. Thus they discover his burned hands. It is a dramatic moment: his comrades are overcome with admiration for the hero. Knowing he has worked so hard while enduring such pain.

Humility, stoicism, buoyant humour are the formula for dramatisation of the mundane. Dramatisation is after all the main problem for the propagandists, second only to correctness of ideological line. For in spite of their mediocrity, the heroes must still shine. Consequently the heroes sometimes take on the slightly incredible appearance of supermen. In his brief 21 years, Mai Hsien-teh had:

1. Emulated Lei Feng by doing all the dirty work on his militia fishing trips.
2. Saved a ton and a half of grain from his commune's flooded storehouse by wading chest-deep through tidal waters and loading the grain onto a boat single-handedly.
3. Battled against the in-rushing tide to repair a breach in a sea-dyke.
4. Won six citations in two years as a militiaman.
5. Received outstanding praise for his performance in naval exercises when he used his own body to block a "leak" in his ship.
6. Remained at his post in the engine room for three hours after he had been critically injured by shrapnel entering his brain.²⁶

Many of the heroes have such catalogues; some are much longer.

Pain is an essential test for any hero; it is also essential as a preparation for the ultimate test—death. Naturally danger cannot lurk in every ordinary event, yet if death were not near, a hero's role would be less glamorous.²⁷ Fearlessness is a serious problem for Maoists; unlike classical heroes, they cannot show bravery by overcoming fears since they can never admit to feeling fear, even for a moment.

Fearing neither hardship nor death is a manifestation of the firmness, the fearless spirit and the revolutionary heroism of the proletariat. It is a mighty spiritual atom bomb. . . . Fearing neither hardship nor death, . . . is a line of demarcation dividing the genuine from the fake revolutionaries. It is a touchstone for testing Marxists and modern revisionists. All true revolutionaries and Marxists fear neither

²⁶ *China Reconstructs*, December 1966, pp. 45-46.

²⁷ Thus it is not surprising that the routines of socialist reconstruction give Wang Chieh opportunities to risk drowning as well as to risk catching colds. Ouyang Hai crawls into burning buildings as well as culverts. Mai Hsien-teh used his body to plug a "leak" in his ship, as well as risking mere seasickness. (In a violent storm, when even the veteran sailors got sick, he stayed on duty 19 hours. "The time to steel ourselves is when there's a strong wind and big waves," he said. "It makes no difference if we vomit.") *Ibid.* pp. 46-47.

hardship nor death; all pseudo-revolutionaries and all revisionists are cowards in the face of hardship and death. In a certain sense this is why they have become revisionists.²⁸

A hero openly courts death, and when it comes it elevates him to a higher plane.²⁹ There is a thrill of achievement which overrides the sense of loss. However, the Maoist heroics must never be confused with tragedy, whose concern is the tragic situation in which a hero is caught between equally valid but irreconcilable truths. For Maoist heroes, there is always only *one* correct way; the mode is one of pure revolutionary optimism. The young people in China today, born and raised in the post-war era, have had relatively little contact with extreme hardship and violent death. So the call to emulate heroic lives undoubtedly injects drama into what might otherwise be a restrained and puritan adolescence. The images used to portray heroes' deaths extract all ugliness and transpose such events to the realms of ecstasy and glory.

Hai charged on to the tracks and, with all his might, pushed the horse out of the path of the train.

The train was not derailed, the passengers were saved, Hai's companions by the roadside were saved, state property was saved, a tragedy was averted. But Communist Ouyang Hai was crushed beneath the massive train wheels. He lay in a pool of blood.

"Squad leader. . . ." His comrades flew to him with a heart-broken cry. The pass threw back a mournful echo. The Hsiang River water, the surrounding mountains, responded sorrowfully:

"Ouyang Hai . . ."

Hai lay in his comrades' arms. His eyes were open and clear, and he looked calmly at the undamaged train, at the passengers safe and sound, at the Hsiang River flowing north, at the sky from which a fine drizzle was falling. In the distance were majestic peaks. Nearby the white pagoda stood proudly on the hill-top.

The train rushed the badly hurt Hai to the county seat, where a waiting ambulance sped with him to a hospital.

With tears in their eyes people softly called his name. Hundreds of soldiers and passengers from the train rolled up their sleeves and offered blood. . . .

²⁸ From the editorial "Emulate Wang Chieh, Great Revolutionary Fighter," *Peking Review*, November 12, 1965. (This logic is again reminiscent of Mao's 1917 essay "A study of Physical Culture," in which "those whose skin is flabby are soft and dull in will." Now by extension, those who are "soft" are easily corrupted by revisionism!)

²⁹ "[Heroes' deaths] are somehow an occasion for pride and satisfaction. We feel not only that their lives are not given in vain, since they have set an example of how a man should behave when he has to pass the final ordeal of manhood, but that by choosing this kind of death he sets a logical and proper goal for himself. . . there is an assumption that, since the hero subjects his human gifts to the utmost strain, he will in the end encounter something beyond him. . . . [But we feel that] it is all somehow splendid and magnificent and what they themselves would have wished for." Bowra, pp. 75-76.

Hai lay quietly on his bed, the blood of class brothers flowing into his body, slowly, drop by drop, through a transfusion tube. He was so calm, so peaceful. On his face there was no trace of pain. It was as if he had just returned from completing some task and was smilingly thinking of taking up another and heavier load for socialist construction. His deep, clear eyes seemed to glow, and several times he moved his lips, trying to speak. He smiled as if he had already discovered the secret of the defence plant.

Suddenly the flow of blood through the tube ceased. Hai's heart had stopped beating. His eyes slowly closed. A short and glorious life of twenty-three years had come to an end.

On the hill-tops of Phoenix Village the sun was shining. The pine tree at the Ouyang family door, washed clear by the recent rain, looked especially straight and green.

Many pine nuts had sprouted at its foot and healthy saplings were growing in the sunlight.

The pine tree stood like a hero's monument erected on the hill-top, erected in the people's hearts, eternal, for all generations to come.³⁰

This is what the Chinese communists themselves call revolutionary romanticism: writing should portray things as they ought to be, not necessarily as they are and thus such treatment of death is perfectly justified.³¹ This is also an image of death eminently suitable to the natural romanticism of young people because it tells us that for a revolutionary hero, death holds neither pain, nor fear, nor disfigurement. Transfixed by inner visions, the hero watches himself pass into immortality. He dies in spiritual certainty.

Human ties which bind, also hinder. They urge the kind of caution which hampers revolutionary daring. They pose alternative responsibilities and complex situations which cannot yield so easily to the doctrinal simplifications of revolutionary devotion. The PLA soldiers, young and unattached, have none of these shortcomings. Wang Chieh's diary amply illustrates this. For example, September 10, 1964:

I have repeatedly received letters from my family urging me to return home and marry. But I know for certain that one cannot push aside

³⁰ *Chinese Literature*, November 1966, pp. 103-104.

³¹ See for example Kuo Mo-jo's speech *Lang-man-chu-i ho hsien-shih-chu-i* (Romanticism and Realism) in *Hung Ch'i* (Red Flag) No. 3, 1958. It is a speech celebrating the publication of 19 of Mao's poems whose appearance coincided with the initiation of the Great Leap Forward. This timing is significant, as the poems were obviously intended to whip up the people's emotions and revolutionary fervour for the Leap. In his speech, Kuo Mo-jo makes such statements as: "[Mao] is the greatest realist, but I dare say, he is also the greatest romantic." "The present age of the Great Leap Forward should be called the Age of Revolutionary Romanticism and the Age of Revolutionary Realism." And, "in one's youth, romantic elements are preponderant, whereas in adulthood, realistic elements become preponderant." He equates realism with fact and romanticism with imagination, and arrives at the conclusion that so long as art and literature have some basis in fact "imagination and exaggeration are permissible" and even desirable in order to create "typical characters in typical circumstances—in other words, to represent the world as it ought to be."

the task of the Party to go and manage one's own affairs. Now I am still young; to postpone marriage for a few years is not too late.

Whatever other advantages there may be to the military as a model—it is certain that since it is the most highly organised sector of society, it is therefore easiest to propagandise.

HEROISM: WANG CHIN-HSI AND CHIAO YÜ-LU

In February 1966, at the same time that Mai Hsien-teh was publicised, two other heroes were brought to national attention and for the first time in recent years they were adults, men in their early forties. Wang Chin-hsi (43), a worker, and Chiao Yü-lu (42), a Party cadre, fit a very different model from that of the young heroes. Wang Chin-hsi, known as the "Man of Iron," was a drill team captain who pioneered in the drive to open up the Tach'ing oilfields. He received nation-wide publicity when, shortly after his promotion to vice-director of the oilfield, he made several radio and television broadcasts telling the Tach'ing story. He tells how he led his team to move and instal heavy machinery by hand, how they improvised for lack of materials, how they sacrificed personal comfort in their own living accommodation in order to save capital for the oil industry. In all the publicity about him, we never learn anything about his personal life or thoughts; a Herculean figure, he is shown only in his working capacity as a robust, capable, indefatigable worker and leader of men.

Chiao Yü-lu was the Party secretary in Lank'ao County, Honan, one of the most difficult agricultural areas in the country. He did not receive publicity until February 1966. The Party undoubtedly waited to launch the Chiao Yü-lu campaign until the Chiao Yü-lu agricultural plan had proved itself, which it did by 1965. When Chiao Yü-lu arrived in Lank'ao in the winter of 1962, he at once began mapping geographical patterns of storm and flood for the purpose of control. Although suffering from cancer of the liver, he refused medical care and continued to work energetically. He died just 18 months after his arrival in Lank'ao, having worked up to his last moment of consciousness, "giving his life for the people."

The Chiao Yü-lu campaign was aimed at adults, especially at high-ranking Party cadres, PLA officers and cadres "above the regimental level," and some leadership cadres in universities.³² Since this campaign (and Wang Chin-hsi's) coincided with the Mai Hsien-teh campaign,

³² A few excerpts from reports on the campaign in the provinces will give an idea of how this image was aimed, and of what effects were sought. Anhwei: "The Anhwei Military District is launching an upsurge of learning from Chiao Yü-lu and Mai Hsien-teh. Many leadership comrades, office cadres, soldiers, and medical orderlies were weeping by the time they had finished listening to our reading about

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it may show a deliberate attempt to produce a different kind of role model for an older age group. Previously, the Wang Chieh type heroes had been held up to these same adult groups for emulation; by this time, such "kid stuff" may have provoked considerable dissatisfaction. Several questions come to mind about the Chiao Yü-lu and Wang Chin-hsi campaigns. Were they a move by the Party, or the Liu Shao-chi faction, to counteract the deluge of young PLA-type heroes, and to revive and reinforce the traditional image of the good and selfless cadres? The Chiao Yü-lu campaign continued through April, parallel to and sometimes combined with (in the case of the army), the emulation of Mai Hsien-teh. During the same period, numerous PLA soldiers received local publicity for heroism. This might have been a Mao-Lin move to swamp the Chiao Yü-lu party image.³³

Chiao Yü-lu is a highly sympathetic hero because he is shown as a kindly, gentle person whose job was to work with and inspire people. He is shown sharing their sorrows and hardships in much the same way as pre-Liberation cadres did while working with the peasants in guerrilla areas. The similarity is heightened because Lank'ao County is a disaster area. The dramatic element in the Chiao Yü-lu story is once again a heroic conquest of pain. It is this personal struggle against pain in order to harness the forces of nature for the good of man, which makes him a Promethean, rather than merely a Herculean figure.

Some of the comrades tried to . . . get him to direct the work from headquarters, for they knew he was having liver trouble. But he refused. He said: "One can't eat bread chewed by others. I can't direct the work only from reports. . . ."

During these months, the county secretary often took his meals

the record of Chiao Yü-lu." ". . . On 11th February, the Shou County CCP Committee held a standing committee meeting to compare themselves with Chiao Yü-lu. (Feng Lin) Secretary of the Committee said: 'although Comrade Chiao Yü-lu was only at Lank'ao for something over a year, he visited 120 of the County's 149 production brigades. I have been working in Shou County for 10 years, but I haven't got round so much as he did. My work has been like catching sparrows with my eyes closed.' Vice-Secretary (Yu Huai-pao) said: 'Chiao Yü-lu did not want to rest and persisted in work despite his severe liver disease. My illness is lighter than his, yet I take regular rest; I feel ashamed, comparing myself with him. Learning from Chiao Yü-lu has increased my strength.' The participants all pledged to learn from Chiao Yü-lu with actual deeds." SWB, FE/2096.

³³ The pattern of publicity seems to be that, if Chiao was Party-promoted, he was also supported by a directive of the General Political Department of the PLA—then under Hsiao Hua. Hsiao Hua was appointed by Liu Shao-chi in 1964, was criticised in January 1967, and disappeared in the summer of 1967. However, neither Chiao Yü-lu nor Wang Chin-hsi were mentioned in army newspaper editorials. It seems that although the *People's Daily* editorialises on all the heroes, the *Liberation Army Daily* does so only for PLA heroes.

while working waist deep in water, or took "cat-naps" squatting in the wet fields. On one occasion after days of heavy rain, when news came in that the floods had spread to all parts of the county, Chiao Yü-lu said unexpectedly: "This is very important, it is just what we need to see the floods at their worst." Rounding up several other members of the team, he immediately left, stick in hand, to study the characteristics of the flood. Amidst rushing torrents, standing under an umbrella, the secretary sketched the topography in key places. They passed several villages that day. When he was asked by local peasants to come in and eat, he excused himself, saying: "the rain is heavy. Our people have not enough firewood. . . ."

[When winter snowstorms came] Chiao Yü-lu said: "this is no time for sitting by the fireside. We communists must be out among the people, taking care of them and helping them in these difficult days." As he tramped through the snow with some of the young people from his office, he led them in singing "Nanniwan," the great song of victory over nature that was so popular in the early revolutionary years in Yen-an. In the cold and wind, he reminded them of the Red Army on the world famous Long March and remarked: "Aren't we, too, engaged in a similar venture?"

In a single day, they visited nine villages, bringing relief to dozens of peasant families in want. In the Hsulou village, Chiao Yü-lu called on a childless old couple. The elderly bed-ridden husband asked him who he was. Chiao Yü-lu replied: "Your son." Asked why he came, the secretary said: "Chairman Mao has sent me to help." The old man wept. The secretary added: "The power is now in our own hands. We shall bring an end to this calamity and poverty." In many production teams the people refused to accept any relief. "Give it to others in greater need. We'll manage," they said.

The Communist Party's work was having its effect. Its call for self-reliance through hard creative work was becoming a material force.³⁴⁻³⁵

These adult heroes differ from their youthful contemporaries like Mai Hsien-teh, in several respects. Wang Chin-hsi and Chiao Yü-lu are in the Stakhanov pattern. They are defined by their occupations and excel in energy drive, endurance, resourcefulness and devotion to their work. They are presented only from an objective viewpoint, only in action. Their diaries have not been published, we never see them introspect, never see them "grow" from doubt to certainty and never, in fact, see them doubt. In short their correct political understanding is a given condition of their good character. It is not portrayed as a product of Maoist thought reform, although token references to his work are made; much credit is given to the Party. They are men of action, clearly defined; they do not contemplate. They have none of the spiritual glamour, the emotional aura or the

³⁴⁻³⁵ NCNA, February 7, 1966, SWB, FE/2084.

romanticism of the young heroes.³⁶ The PLA heroes, on the other hand, perform tasks of equal stamina and courage and are already completely reliant on Mao's thought.

The great amount of detail given about the working methods of Wang Chin-hsi and Chiao Yü-lu seems to emphasise their professional competence in spite of the fact that it is only supposed to illustrate their revolutionary spirit. If these heroes were put forward by the Party in contrast with the youth heroes of the army then the emphasis on professional capability and mature age and the infrequent references to Mao's thought would be symptomatic of a conflict between two policy lines.

HEROISM: THE RED GUARD PERIOD

Since August 1966, the *People's Daily* has carried a stream of reports and editorials on heroic acts of all kinds, by Red Guards, PLA soldiers, peasants, workers, collective heroes. However, although any such event may receive a full page spread for a day or two, it soon drops out of the news and is replaced by others of similar type. Two rather simple explanations may be given for this publicity pattern. First, the prototypes have already been clearly defined in the "Lei Feng—Wang Chieh type" as the Chinese refer to it. Now it is only necessary to report a case of heroism as "another hero has emerged of the Lei Feng—Wang Chieh type," and the new hero's validity as a glorious successor to the tradition is securely established. In other words, Lei Feng and Wang Cheih were themselves something new—representatives of the new type of man—while all who now follow them are "emulators" or "successors" and as such require no further type-casting. In most cases these successive heroes can be distinguished only by the physical circumstances of their deeds: a 12-year-old girl dies pushing her cow out of the path of a train, a peasant dies pushing a boulder out of the path of a train, a man drowns while trying to rescue another from a cesspool. Whereas it was necessary to have long emulation campaigns for Lei Feng, Wang Chieh, Mai Hsien-teh and Liu Ying-chün in order to educate the public to the new heroic mode of Maoist thought and action, it is now equally desirable from the Maoist point of view to have a rapid succession of heroes emerge.

³⁶ Compare this death scene of Chiao Yü-lu to that of Ouyang Hai. Although Chiao Yü-lu's death is moving, it is portrayed in fairly moderate language. "One of Chiao Yü-lu's last requests was to examine an ear of wheat grown on the worst alkaline soil of the country, to see what effect soil improvement had brought. He expressed confidence in what the future held for the people. His last words were: 'I'm sorry I haven't finished the task the Party gave me.' Two books were found under his pillow, the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* and *How to be a Good Communist* by Liu Shao-ch'i." NCNA, February 7, 1966, SWB, FE/2084.

This succession of heroes serves again as "proof" that the new kind of men upon whom Mao's vision of society depends are becoming a multitude.

In the stories of heroism (August 1966–August 1967), there seems little difference between adult and youthful behaviour. Courage, sacrifice and dependence on Mao's thought is represented according to only one pattern. In this sense the adults come close to conforming to the model for youth: the "true proletarian" Maoist activist based on the zealous Wang Chieh type. But although all these heroes adhere to the Wang Chieh tradition, there are some distinctive innovations. The Wang Chieh type heroes illustrated the application of Mao's thought in *everyday life*, while the Red Guard period heroes illustrate the efficacy of Mao's thought in extreme crisis situations. The Wang Chieh type heroes illustrated the *method*; the Red Guard period heroes illustrate the *faith*.

In typical episodes the account begins with the crisis situation and shows the heroes fighting through dangers under the inspiration and guidance of Mao's thought. After they are victorious, the protagonists demonstrate their deep love for Mao by quoting him and praising him. This is also true of the wounded and dying. Their deaths are usually quickly passed over; it is no longer a hero's individual glory that matters, but his eulogy of the Chairman. The heroes' last thoughts and words are devoted to Mao, and *this* is the climax of their heroism.

A forerunner of this new pattern for the hero portraits of the Red Guard period may be found in Mai Hsien-teh's story. Although he fits the Wang Chieh type in other respects, there is one difference, namely, that he does not die but rather his miraculous recovery is a tribute to Mao.³⁷ This is a good example of the hero's actions, especially his injury or death, being overshadowed by the more glorious image of Mao. This kind of hero's "dying aria" in praise of Mao, is greatly elaborated in the Red Guard period heroics. For example, several such scenes occur in the story of Drilling Team 32111 which

³⁷ After his injury in action, Mai Hsien-teh was hospitalised with severe brain damage, half-paralysed and unable to speak. "Yet, even when his life hung by a thread he showed wholehearted devotion to the revolution and to Chairman Mao. The first thing he did when he recovered the power of speech was to sing the revolutionary song 'The East is Red.' Later he asked the nurse to let him read *Quotations from Chairman Mao*. When, for the first time since he was wounded, he opened Volume I of the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* and saw Chairman Mao's picture, his lips quivered. Because he was unable to move his right hand, he learned to hold a pen in his left although only with great difficulty. The first words he then wrote were 'Long Live Chairman Mao' in large characters." *China Reconstructs*, December 1966, p. 47. He has now recovered but "is rather short of memory." *People's Daily*, November 16, 1967.

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fought a half-hour battle against fire in an oilfield in which 22 men were injured and five died:

One worker had 85 per cent. of the surface of his body burned, but he didn't moan at all. When the deputy director [of the hospital] went to see him and gave him a copy of *Quotations from Chairman Mao* he wept with joy and spoke weakly, "I give thanks to the party and for Chairman Mao's concern. I have always thought of Chairman Mao. What I need most is to listen to everything he says. . . ." When his pain got worse, he asked the nurse to read either "To Serve the People" or "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains" to him and then he died.³⁸

Another worker was badly burned—52.7 per cent. of his body was burned. He also asked the nurse to read "To Serve the People" to him. One day, some students came to see him; they couldn't control themselves and cried. The worker said: "Come, come, don't cry. Let us sing: 'Sailing the seas depends on the helmsman.'" Even when he was in a coma, he was still murmuring, "Chairman Mao, I'm always thinking of you." When his pain got worse he shouted slogans: "Long Live Chairman Mao; Long Live the Communist Party" to help him forget his pain. [This man survived, and on August 6 he became a member of the Communist Party.]³⁹

Death scenes are not of course the only occasions on which the Chairman is eulogised, although they are particularly sensational. Any occasion may be utilised, and crises and victories are played for maximum effect. A typical example is this scene from the ordeals of the 41 heroic young Overseas Chinese who were imprisoned in an Indonesian jail from October 10–November 18, 1966, and then sent to China on November 20.

The 41 young people decided to make two presents for Chairman Mao—to make them secretly while still in jail. . . . The girls decided to embroider a red flag. . . . The girls, on the first night, had embroidered the three characters "Mao Chu-hsi" (Chairman Mao), the most resonant, the most glorious name of the whole world. In the morning they discovered the character "hsi" was far from ideal, so they re-did that character that night. In the days when the embroidery was being done, the first thing that the 11 girls did when they got up was to stand round the red flag to caress and examine it, being afraid that there might be a stitch which might not be in its proper position, or not drawn tight. In that case it should be redone.⁴⁰

The personal tone which the young people use about their feelings for the Chairman, and the extremely romantic language is typical. The following death scene illustrates what is perhaps the epitome of language

³⁸ *Hsieh chan huo-hai ti 32111 ying-hsiung tsuan-ching-tui* (The heroic 32111 Drilling Team fights in a sea of fire) (Hong Kong: San-lien, November 1966), p. 40.

³⁹ *China Reconstructs*, December 1966, pp. 45–46.

⁴⁰ *Ssu-shih-i-ke hung hsin hsiang i'ai-yang* (41 Red Hearts towards the Sun: The 41 heroic young Overseas Chinese) (Hong Kong: San-lien, January 1967), pp. 32–33.

and imagery in the Red Guard romantic vein. This is from the story of Wang Li-ch'ing, a 15-year-old boy who drowned while attempting to rescue a child from the river.

In his home our young hero lies in bed exactly as peacefully as he normally sleeps. People stand around him. The aunties in the neighbourhood remember the help he gave them. The greengrocers remember how quietly he came time and time again to wipe the counters for them. Transport workers remember how he helped them push their carts uphill, and children remember how this elder brother often taught them to sing revolutionary songs and to read *Quotations from Chairman Mao*. In every heart there is admiration, love, and grief. The uncles and the aunties touch his pulse again and again and listen to his heart. How they wish that he would come back to life again.⁴¹

In these stories, Mao's thought is invoked less as a body of ideas than as a kind of incantation; even the physical object of the little red plastic-covered volume of Mao's *Quotations* attains quasi-magical significance.⁴² In the tale of the heroic crew of Cargo boat 1018 which was sunk in Tonkin Bay by American planes, the telegraph operator rushed out of the cabin with a copy of the red book of *Quotations* in his hand.

The book is like lightning that flashes across the night sky and shines over the bay. . . . The survivors were swimming in the sea reciting Chairman Mao's words. The first man recited the first line, the second man, the second line. . . .⁴³

The new model of heroes in the Red Guard period seems intended to reduce the sense of individual glory and achievement which had been unavoidably stimulated by the focus on single figures like Wang Chieh. It re-emphasises collective action and shows that such heroism is now a trait of the broad masses. Collective heroes, and the multiplicity of individual heroes who receive only fleeting publicity, by reducing the relative stature of the common-man heroes, also set Mao off to greater advantage as a monumental contrast of individual personality.

THE "CULT OF YOUTH" (AUGUST 1966–AUGUST 1967)

Although all the heroic tales of this period follow the same pattern, it is significant that individual episodes seem confined to a single age

⁴¹ *Mao Chu-hsi chiao-tao ch'u-lai ti jen* (Those who are educated by Chairman Mao: The incident at Kunming Lake and the story of Wang Li-ch'ing) (Hong Kong: San-lien, January 1967), pp. 23–24.

⁴² The image of the Red Guards advancing on their enemies with their red books held before them, reminds one of the Inn Scene in *Faust*. With their sword-hilts raised as crosses before them, the German students advance on the devil who cowers and slinks off, just like a revisionist before the glowing red *Quotations*.

⁴³ *Chan-tou tsai Pei-pu-wan shang* (Fighting at Pei-pu-wan: The heroic crew of Cargo boat No. 1018) (Hong Kong: San-lien, January 1967), pp. 15–16.

group. Either the story is about adults, or youngsters—but not both. How intentional this was is difficult to assess, but the impression is that during the Red Guards' year of glory, "youth" became an ideal for the whole society.

In the spring of 1966, just when the PLA hero campaigns were reaching a new climax, some western observers wrote that the aging leaders and Mao in particular were becoming increasingly cut off from large areas of society, especially from youth. Then on July 16, Mao swam the Yangtse. By this symbolic act, Mao came out of semi-seclusion, and secured in one stroke his new image as a physically fit and emotionally sympathetic leader of youth. It is the "boy-scout leader" image: an image which combines the remoteness of an adored hero, and the familiarity of the "one who really understands us"—the man so wise, but still so young at heart.

Chairman Mao, it is you who understand us best, who know how eager young people are to make revolution and rise in rebellion. You give us the greatest support and inspiration. We shall always follow you to advance through storms and waves.⁴⁴

The Wang Chieh type diaries increasingly emphasised a direct channel of inspiration and instruction between Mao, his "thought" and the youth. This is even more evident in stories of heroism written for or about the Red Guards, in the period of August 1966–August 1967. In these stories, supposed to be accounts of real events, the young people draw their inspiration entirely from Chairman Mao's thoughts. In the incident at Kunming Lake in Peking on November 27, 1966, thousands of Red Guards were visiting the lake the day after Chairman Mao had appeared at the last million-strong Red Guard rally. One boy fell through the ice. But then, all wanted to be heroes, so dozens jumped onto the ice to rescue him. Then these also started to drown. The more who attempted rescues, the more who were in need of help.

Bamboo poles, wood planks and rope were passed through innumerable pairs of hands onto the ice, thus powerfully supporting the comrades struggling in the water. The young Red Guards on the shore knew that what their comrades in arms struggling in the water needed most was Chairman Mao's thought. They shouted in one voice—

"Be resolute, do not fear sacrifice,
Overcome every difficulty, be victorious."

"Be resolute, do not fear sacrifice,
Overcome every difficulty, be victorious."

These are Chairman Mao's words. This is the call of Chairman Mao, the reddest red sun in our hearts.

⁴⁴ *Chinese Literature*, November 1966, p. 10.

On the shore, on the ice, in the water, their hearts were kneaded into one by these words. Oh Chairman Mao, Chairman Mao! We listen to what you say, we are not afraid of even the greatest difficulties in the world. Oh Chairman Mao! We will be your good fighters!

Hsing Yun-fa, a Red Guard from Hailin of Heilungkiang, fell through the ice himself as he was trying to help the others. When he found a hole and popped up from under the ice, suddenly a red light flashed by his eyes. He at once realized that [his copy of] *Quotations from Chairman Mao* was at the bottom of the lake. He said to himself: "I can afford to lose everything except this book by Chairman Mao." At once he fished up that glowing red treasure book, and raised it high as if he was face to face with Chairman Mao. The day before when he was reviewed by Chairman Mao, he wrote on the title page of this red book with unbounded love and affection towards the great leader: "Our leader Chairman Mao passed by my side. This was my greatest happiness!" He tacitly swore to Chairman Mao: "Oh Chairman Mao! I will listen to what you say, always, and be your good fighter!" It was Chairman Mao who encouraged him to carry on the struggle. He waded in the water together with another comrade, to help a Red Guard in the water. But because the ice kept collapsing, he made several efforts in vain. He was submerged, swallowed several mouthfuls of icy water and was almost choked unconscious. Just at this time, Hsing heard the shouting on the shores: "Be resolute, do not fear sacrifice, overcome every difficulty, be victorious." Suddenly he acquired new energy.⁴⁵

These stories and accounts completely omit any mention of adults except for reactionary villains like the Indonesian jailors in the story of the 41 heroic overseas Chinese. At the Kunming Lake incident, soldiers are present as councillors but they are almost as young as the Guards themselves, and likewise filled with Maoist fervour. The youngsters have the stage to themselves until the full dramatic episode is over; throughout, they are alone with only Mao for guidance. Politically speaking, the omission of cadres and teachers from the story is Mao's way of circumventing the Party's authority, and of showing the youth to be personally loyal to himself and his doctrines. However, from a sociological point of view, a different but equally clear moral is evident, namely: no adult supervision is necessary. Youth is wise by virtue of its youth alone. It needs no other wisdom than belief in Chairman Mao, and certainly should not be "coddled" or protected from danger. On the contrary, youth is encouraged to take violent action.

In the hero literature for the Red Guards, two images are thus raised together: Mao and a few other veteran and venerable ancients, the "makers of the revolution," and youth, the "true successors." The former are the idolised giant personalities, the latter the "nameless heroes." Between these two extremes there are no ideals and few

⁴⁵ *Kunming Lake*, pp. 9-12.

THE EMULATION OF HEROES

images. There are no distinct role models for the middle generation (25-50). This group is often betrayed as emotionally dull, ideologically weak, and culturally superseded. In situations where older people are singled out for praise and emulation, their behaviour is an imitation of the prized youthful zeal and simplicity.

Because youth is the most rebellious and idealistic age of man, it must have seemed an especially suitable vehicle for Mao's ideology of perpetual revolution. "Youth" as a psychological state (the state of unresolved personality, a feeling of unlimited potentials, perpetual rebelliousness) and perpetual rebellion as ideology—form complementary syndromes. A strong strain of romantic idealism has always been apparent in the Maoist vision of revolution, but in the Red Guard period this proclivity for the images and symbols of romanticism was carried to new extremes: (1) youth as the ideal condition of life; (2) the Faustian struggle to break through the physical constraints of tradition and old age by returning to or emulating the condition of youth; (3) destruction and renewal through perpetual rebellion of younger generations against older; (4) the glorification of death and sacrifice; (5) freedom conceived as service to an immortal ideal.

With the resumption of school in the autumn of 1967, adult authority has tried to reassert itself. The excesses of the "cult of youth" must now be apparent even to the Maoists, and as the cultural revolution enters another phase, we may expect another change in the models. The Red Guard period raises many questions. If there is only one standard for behaviour, and this is most appropriate to youth, where will the adult get his sense of maturity? Likewise, while "youth" remains the ideal, then "adulthood" can hardly seem appealing to the youngsters. On the other hand, if the older generations reassert themselves, will the youth become cynical or disillusioned, feeling that their special role and all the promises made to them as revolutionary successors are being pre-empted? Age differentiation of roles and values has essential social functions. But so far, in the cultural revolution, ideal behaviour patterns seem to be approximately the same for all ages.

Another distinction which seems to have become blurred is that between the Stakhanov and Wang Chieh models. For a while, during the Red Guard period, it appeared that the Stakhanov type might have become somewhat tainted by its association with the Russian style, with Party methods and with "economism." Thus the young fighter model was made to serve all Maoist purposes. However the last months of 1967 have produced a few stories about peasants and workers which seem to resort to the familiar occupational portraits, with the essential difference that their "working style" is now entirely based on Wang

Chieh type thought processes. It is too early to see if this is really the new trend. Indeed the use of Stakhanov types will probably not be clear to us until the cultural revolution is past history, and the manifestations of the Party line in various forms of propaganda can be disentangled from the work of the Maoists.

CONCLUSION

The Maoist attempts at "planned behaviour" pose many problems. Within an overall ideological framework which must maintain a semblance of consistency, emphasis on particular values must be constantly adjusted. All aspects of the system are dynamic, and the planners cannot know exactly what adjustments to make next until they get an obvious response in a certain direction. As the models are designed to stir up even the most "backward" among the population, they must be extreme in one way or another. Emulation by ordinary people may result in exaggerated copying of the obvious features and insufficient copying of subtle and difficult ones: on a mass scale this can produce unforeseen distortions. Factionalism is an example. It is at least partially a result of activist self-righteousness. Even the propagandists, as the author of *The Song of Ouyang Hai* stated, were aware of the dangers of the "self-assertive principle" in dealing with the complexities of heroism. Mao-study has become increasingly "fundamentalist," and all fundamentalist movements are prone to factionalism.

It would seem that in creating models to illustrate an increasingly dogmatic ideological line, all differentiations tend to converge towards a single model. This is because the preferred type must possess *all* the correct ideological attributes. These cannot be distributed unevenly in order to create role differentiations, as all *good* people must be ideologically complete. Yet no single model can satisfy the need for social diversity. So the model will have to be constantly readjusted in order to meet new needs and to correct the deficiencies and excesses created by previous models.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Writing at a time when the Mao-Party conflict had not yet revealed itself openly, Franz Schurmann dealt with the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party as an "organisational ideology" and generalised this theory for Chinese society as a whole. Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 18-19. Hero emulation and Mao-study were developed as two aspects of a single technique by which Maoists might communicate with individuals directly, circumventing the ideological authority of the Party organisation. This raises the technical problem of how to implement a "mass line" on a non-organisational, individual level, while still maintaining the political force and cohesion of the "mass movement."